# Morning Star by botanicapoetica

**Series:** Call & Respond [3]
**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)
**Genre:** Gen, Hurt/Comfort, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, M/M, Violence
**Language:** English
**Characters:** Billy Hargrove, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Steve Harrington
**Relationships:** Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington
**Status:** Completed
**Published:** 2017-12-03
**Updated:** 2017-12-03
**Packaged:** 2022-04-03 05:08:29
**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences
**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply
**Chapters:** 1
**Words:** 1,203
**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org
**Summary:**

“You want us to call anybody? Your old man to pick you up when we get to the station?” Hopper said, more to gauge whether his gut feeling was correct or not. He didn’t know what to feel when he realized how right he was, when he felt Hargrove stiffen next to him, his sniffling sharp and frequent for a minute. Something familiar again, making him inexplicably want to talk to Eleven right that minute to remind her he was there. Hopper almost had to lean closer to hear the next few words, which should’ve been a question but were rushed out too quickly and too quietly.

“Can you call Harrington instead.”

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**Author's Note:**

This one's for you, Mel.

"Hopper, we've got someone reporting public drunkenness. Billy Hargrove, they think. Said they didn't want to get close enough to be sure, guess he's making a mess outside of Bradley's Big Buy."

Hopper ran a hand over his face, heaving out a sigh. He'd seen Hargrove around, had heard some stories, and knew this wasn't going to be the easiest interaction. "On it, boss." He shot over his shoulder at Flo, grabbing his keys and jacket on his way out the door. The sound of glass breaking greeted him as he parked outside the supermarket, followed by a laugh that could only be the little shit he was here to see. Hopper walked to the entrance, watching as the Hargrove kid took a hard swing at a newspaper dispenser, his teeth gritted and his hands covered in blood. The kid didn't seem that drunk, just angry in a way Hopper didn't see often.

"Hargrove. Billy, right? I'd back away if I were you, unless you feel like paying for more than you've already wrecked." He tried, exasperated. It was too late in the day for this shit, he still needed to tell El he wouldn't be back on time, and the response didn't help either. "Fuck you, pig." Billy spit out, but backed away, and the kid was walking sort of funny but Hopper couldn't quite tell. Just knew he must be hurt by the tightening of his face as he moved.

"You need a doctor, Hargrove?"

"Don't need shit, old man. Fuck!" Billy said, trying for more anger but coming up short when he twisted wrong, arm flying to cover his ribs. Hopper watched him sit heavily on the ground and he wasn't quite close enough but thought he could see some sweat on the kid's face, the tell tale tightness of injury clouding his expression.

"C'mon. You don't need an ambulance but I'm willing to bet you need to see a doctor."

“FUCK you.” Hargrove snarled, and goddammit this kid was like a dog with a rope. Hopper walked closer, bending down to help him up at least, and was thanked for it with a sharp punch to the face. With a curse he stepped back, rubbing at his jaw and heaving another sigh. “Wrong move, son.” He ground out, and reached to grab at Billy’s arms to haul him up.

“NO.”

Hopper felt his blood go cold watching the kid scramble backwards, his animalistic rage shifting into something familiar. He knew that look; he was sure he’d had it on his own face as a little shithead, facing down his old man after he’d had too much to drink. Hargrove’s hands were out in front of him defensively but they were rattling violently, and his eyes wouldn’t leave their post tracking Hopper’s own. Expecting something, preparing himself maybe. Jesus, how was he gonna get this kid into his car?

Guilt coursing through him that he wasn’t going to poke at too much, he gripped and pinned Hargrove’s arms behind his back, hastily reading him his rights while he cuffed him. Once he got him standing he essentially had to drag him to the car, the kid screaming and kicking the entire time like a feral animal. Putting him inside was no better, and Hopper was shocked when after a few minutes of driving Billy was screaming again, slamming his body into the door as hard as he could. This had him screeching to a halt, whipping around to face Hargrove.

“Hey kid. Kid, relax! HEY!” He barked in his most authoritative tone, finally getting somewhere when Hargrove stopped, his eyes wide and focused on Hopper. “We’re just gonna get you checked out before you get booked, you need to calm down so they don’t restrain you when we get there.”

At this, Billy seemed to pale again, realizing there was no way out. His screaming and kicking stopped for the rest of the ride, his posture stiff and hyper aroused. Hopper got him out of the car with no problems this time aside from a moment where Hargrove tried to dig his heels into the gravel, and tried to keep his grip on his arm as light as he reasonably could on their way into the clinic. After checking him in, Hopper sat Billy down and picked the seat next to him. He

watched the young man tip his head back and stare wetly at the ceiling, knew that move too, knew what it looked like when it failed. He turned his eyes elsewhere as he spoke to him, trying to give him the little space he was capable of giving.

“You want us to call anybody? Your old man to pick you up when we get to the station?” Hopper said, more to gauge whether his gut feeling was correct or not. He didn’t know what to feel when he realized how right he was, when he felt Hargrove stiffen next to him, his sniffling sharp and frequent for a minute. Something familiar again, making him inexplicably want to talk to Eleven right that minute to remind her he was there. Hopper almost had to lean closer to hear the next few words, which should’ve been a question but were rushed out too quickly and too quietly.

“Can you call Harrington instead.”

“Sure, kid.”

While Billy was in the doctor’s office Hopper did just that, surprised at how quickly Steve not only said he was coming but how quickly he’d hung up once he’d gotten enough information. Hopper sat down outside the office, itching for a cigarette and telling himself that he couldn’t stow another kid away in his cabin until a magical solution appeared. He was lost in hypotheticals when he heard Steve’s sneakers squeaking from the force of his turn around the corner and waved the kid over before he started flipping his lid.

“He’s alright, Harrington. Doctor said bruised ribs, he’ll be fine. I was gonna book him but I’m thinking I’ll just have him pay for what he broke and you make sure he ends up somewhere safe. Sound good?” Hopper said, trying to keep some authority in his voice to betray how soft he knew he was being. Steve was nodding furiously, eyeing the closed door.

“Can I see him?”

At that moment the doctor exited, leaving the door open and looking at Hopper. Hopper pointed to the offered door for Harrington to take the hint and wasn’t surprised when he rushed right in. Jim turned around to accept the discreetly folded domestic violence handouts

from the doctor, sharing a solemn nod and turning his eyes back to the exam room.

Billy was still sitting on the exam table, his legs dangling and making him look like the kid he really was. Hopper watched Harrington put his hands on the other boy's face and blanched as he watched Steve kiss him carefully and slowly, like it was his face that was injured instead. When they pulled back, Billy's eyes were clearer than they'd been all night.

As Hopper turned to take his leave, something soft settled in his chest. It looked like the kid had somebody to watch over him. Now he had another.